

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR A CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER FOR
CHILDREN

By Dr. Myron J. Taylor

The psychologists, who understand children, tells us that as children get older they ask four different kinds of questions. As they grow older they move from one question to the other. First the child asks, *What is it?* Children come into a world that is new and strange and they have to learn what each thing is. Then the children ask, *What is it for?* There is little reason to know what a thing is unless we also know the purpose for which it was made. The next question is, *How does it work?* The mind of the child wonders how the things of life act and work. Lastly children ask, *Why is it?* And that is the question that so often leads straight to God.

Let us take these four questions which the child asks, and apply them to the Lord's Supper, for it will then mean more to us and to the children. Here are a few instructions for the communion service. (1) Get the children seated comfortably. (2) Get their attention—make sure they are quiet. Tell them this is the most sacred act of Christian worship. It is here that we show our respect for God. (3) Present one of the meditations on the questions mentioned above. Use a different meditation each week. Have a reverent attitude yourself. Handle the elements carefully. (4) Give the words of institution:

FOR THE BREAD.

"The Jesus took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me'" (Luke 22:19).

FOR THE CUP.

"And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood'" (Luke 22:20).

THEN PRAY THIS PRAYER.

Kind, gracious, and merciful God, we give you praise and thanks for the privilege of living, for the opportunity of knowing about your love for us made known in Jesus Christ, and for the church which teaches us and encourages us to live as Christians every day of our lives. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

PASS THE BREAD to each child, bless them as they receive the bread and have them hold it in their hands until each child has a wafer. They say again—"This is my body which is given for you." Have them all take the bread at the same time. Give them a minute to be quiet and think about the meaning of it.

PASS A CUP to each child, bless them as they receive the cup, and have them hold it (being careful not to spill it on their clothes). They say again—"This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant (new agreement) in my blood." Have them all drink the cup together. Return the cups to the tray. Give a minute to think about what it means.

CLOSE THE SERVICE WITH A PRAYER.

Dear God, teach us to love you and to love all of those whom we meet in our home, in our school, and all along the road of life. Help us to be kind to our parents, our brothers and sisters, and to all our friends. Help us to be especially kind to those who are laughed at, those who are hurt, and those who are lonely. Guide us so that we may be good and faithful Christians all this week. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER FOR CHILDREN
The Place Where We Meet Jesus

By Dr. Myron J. Taylor

1. See that the table is properly prepared.
Table Cloth neatly placed on Table.
Candles put in place.
Communion tray put in place.
A stand for those who speak.
2. Have everyone seated comfortably.
3. Light candles—There is a reason for having candles on the table. Isaiah said, "The Lord will be your everlasting light" (60:19). John said of Jesus, "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (1:5). Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (*John 9:5*). Candles represent the presence of God in the midst of his people.
4. Period of Silent Meditation.
We are gathered here about this table for a very special reason—to keep the Supper Jesus asked us to keep. In these moments we want to think about Jesus and his love for us. This is the most sacred act of Christian Worship. Nothing we ever do in life will be more important than this. Here we show our respect for God. This is the place where we meet Jesus. Open your mind to Jesus. Let him come in. Think about how he loves you and how you love him as we prepare to celebrate the Supper.
5. Sing Hymn of Preparation Pg. 773 As Your Family, Lord (1,2,3)
6. Present Communion Meditation—Meditation #1

The Two leaders go to the table, remove the lids from the trays and give the Words of Institution)
7. The Words of Institution
For the Bread: "Then Jesus took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me'" (Luke 22:19).
For the Cup: "And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood/?' (Luke 22:20).
8. Communion Prayer—Let us pray. Kind, gracious, and merciful God, we give you praise and thanks for the privilege of living, for the opportunity of knowing about your love for us made known in Jesus Christ, and for the church which teaches us and encourages us to live as Christians every day of our lives. Through Jesus Christ we pray.

9. Partaking of the elements

Bread: Server will say—As we pass the bread to you, take a wafer, hold it in your hand and think about what it means until all have been served. Then we will all partake together

(Server—as you pass the wafer to each person take time to say to each of them "GOD BLESS YOU" and you might call their name if you know it. When all have been served the server will then say, "This is my body which is given for you." Now let us all partake of the wafer together, and take time to think about what it means. (Observe at least 30 seconds of silence).

Cup—As we pass the cup, to each of you, hold the cup in your hand until everyone has been served and think about what it means. Be careful not to spill the cup on your clothes.. (Server—as you pass the tray to each person take time to say to them, "This is for you," and you may call their name if you know it.) When all have been served the server will say, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." Now let us all partake of the cup together, and take some time to think about what it means. (Server—have them all drink the cup at the same time. Return the cups to the tray. Give them at least 30 seconds to think about what it means).

10. CLOSING PRAYER by one of the leaders:

Dear God, teach us to love you and to love all of those whom we meet in our home, in our school, and all along the road of life. Help us to be especially kind to those who are laughed at, those who are hurt, and those who are lonely. Guide us so that we may be good and faithful Christians all this week. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen

PRAY TOGETHER THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name,
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our sins,
As we forgive those who sin against us;
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil
For thine is the Kingdom,
And the power, and the glory, forever. AMEN

Suggested Communion Meditations
To use in the Celebration of the Lord's Supper for Children
by Dr. Myron J. Taylor

MEDITATION – ONE

We call it the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. What is a sacrament? A sacrament is two things. First, a sacrament is something quite common and ordinary, which has acquired a meaning and significance and a value far beyond itself. We see this principle in action every day.

When Lord Nelson, the great British Admiral, was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral in London, a group of sailors carried his casket to its grave. One who watched said: "With reverence and efficiency, they lowered the body of the great admiral into the tomb. Then all the sailors seized the Union Jack (the British flag) with which the casket had been covered and tore it to fragments, and each sailor took a piece of the flag as his souvenir of the great admiral." That is a sacrament. These little pieces of colored cloth have acquired a meaning and a value and a significance far beyond themselves.

And that is the way it is with the wafer and the wine of the Lord's Supper. Today we take into our hands and place within our lips the common elements of bread and wine, but because of what Jesus did in the Upper Room in Jerusalem on the night before he was crucified, these common elements have a meaning far beyond themselves—they speak to us of Jesus' death, his body, broken and his blood spilled out for us. To the person who has a heart to feel and an eye to see and a mind to understand, these common elements have in them all the wonder and the glory of the love of God. These elements say "God loves you, Jenny! God loves you Brandon! God loves you, Napoleon! God loves you, and you, and you.."

MEDITATION – TWO

We call the Lord's Supper a sacrament. What is a sacrament? A sacrament is, first of all something quite simple, quite ordinary, quite common, which has acquired a meaning and significance and a value far beyond itself. The bread we use would cost a few pennies, and the little cup of wine a few pennies more, but they have a supreme value to the Christian because they speak to us of God who loves us and Jesus who died for us. We see this sacramental principle in action every day.

In Dr. Taylor's study there is a display of figures made out of coal from his native state of West Virginia. His father was a coal miner. Among the items in the display is an old, battered carbide light, which the miners wore on their cloth caps in the early days. You put the nuggets of carbide in the bottom of the light, release some water from a small chamber in the top, which created fumes. A small container on the flash of the light held a small flint which created a spark which ignited the carbide fumes and made a light. Most people today would throw the old light away as useless—a relic of another time. But to Dr. Taylor, it is precious because it speaks to him of his father who slaved in the coalmines to make a living for his family. That old light has a value and a meaning far beyond itself. Most of you probably have something like that—a common

thing that has uncommon meaning to you because of the memory of someone dear to you. (You might ask the children to name the things they have which has special value.)

That is the key to the meaning of the Lord's Supper. To someone it might appear to be just juice and crackers. But to the person who has a heart to feel and an eye to see and a mind to understand, they see in the bread and wine all of the wonder and the glory of the love of God. It is a wonderful thing to be loved, and the Lord's Supper says to each one of you—"God loves you."

MEDITATION – THREE.

The second meaning of the word "sacrament" comes from the word sacramentum, which, in Latin, meant the oath of loyalty which a Roman soldier gave to the Roman Empire and the Roman Emperor. When a soldier went into the Roman army he raised his right and swore to be loyal and faithful, to obey the commands his superiors, to give his life, if necessary, in battle. That oath is called a sacrament—a sacred oath.

When we become a Christian we stand before people and confess that Jesus is Lord and Savior. When we are baptized we say Jesus is the Lord of my life. Baptism is the sacrament of initiation—the way by which we are made a Christian and become a member of the church. The Lord's Supper is the sacrament by which we promise to continue to live as a Christian all through the coming week. Whatever else we may forget this day, let us remember that we have pledged ourselves—promised our God—that we will be faithful to him. That is our pledge of allegiance. God has said—"I love you, John." When we take the bread and wine we say to God—"I love you, God." God help us to keep that pledge.

MEDITATION – FOUR.

"What is it for? There are two answers to that question. First quite simply, the Lord's Supper is meant to make us remember. Human memory has a way of forgetting. Things that once meant much to us, over a period of time will grow dim and fade away. Pictures remind us of our loved ones and friends. Mothers cherish the pictures of their babies that died when they were young. Holidays remind us of great days in the history of our country—like Lincoln's birthday. Worship reminds us of God. The Lord's Supper reminds us of Jesus—especially of his death on our behalf. Jesus didn't want us to forget his death, so he said, "Do this in remembrance—to remember—me." When we think of Jesus dying for us, we remember that he loves us very much. It is a wonderful thing to be loved. God loves you. Don't ever forget that.

MEDITATION – FIVE.

The Lord's Supper is not only meant to make us remember, but it is meant to bring us into direct, living contact with the living Christ. There are certain places which bring us into living contact with people whom we cannot see. Maybe it is the place where you became engaged to the girl whom you loved, or maybe it is six feet of grass-covered earth in a cemetery where your father is buried. There is an old legend about Zacchaeus, whom we meet in the Bible. Sometimes he vanished and no one knew where he was. One day someone followed him and saw him walk down the road to a certain tree and stand beside it and touch it with almost a caress. The one who

followed him asked, "Zacchaeus, why do you do that?" And Zacchaeus answered, "It was from this tree that I first met my lord, and whenever I am troubled or tired, or worried or lonely, I come out here beside this tree and I meet Jesus again." Jesus is not someone in the past, he is alive, and we can meet him. Through the Holy Spirit, he is here. We can meet him anywhere, but he has especially promised to meet us in the celebration of the supper.

MEDITATION – SIX.

When we explain things to children, they like to ask, "*How does it work?*" That is a good question to be asked of the Lord's Supper. Like all things in life it is true that what we bring determines what we get. That is why Paul says, "Examine yourselves"—be sure you bring something to the celebration of the supper. What do you bring? We can bring expectation. Come with your mind centered on Jesus Christ. This is a special time to think about Jesus. Come with your heart on fire expecting great things to happen. Expect great things from God, and he will not disappoint you. If you are lonely, expect Jesus to come near to you as a friend. If you are afraid, listen to Jesus saying, "Be not afraid." If you have sinned, hear Jesus saying, "Go you way and sin no more." If you are weak, feel new energy flow through you and make you strong. Come, and partake, expecting great things from God, and he will not disappoint you.

MEDITATION – SEVEN

When we come to celebrate the supper, what do we bring? It is important that we understand, here as in all of life, what we bring determines what we get. When you come to the Lord's Supper bring your faith. Faith means the utter certainty that all that Jesus said and promised is true. It means trusting Jesus to be the Messiah, Son of God, Lord, Savior, and Friend. Faith also has a strong element of obedience—the willingness to do what Jesus wants us to do. If we come believing that Jesus loves us, that he died for us, that God does open his hand to satisfy our deepest desires, that if we come to Jesus he will never let us down, he will never turn away from us, and that we can expect wonderful things to happen today. God has many rich blessings for you. Open your heart and be willing to receive them. The Lord's Supper helps you to grow and continue to be a Christian.

MEDITATION – EIGHT.

When children ask questions about things they want to know, they ask, "*What is it?*" "*What is it for?*" "*How does it work?*" and then they ask, "*Why is it?*". That is a good question for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper—why is it? And there is only one answer—because God so loved the world. Sometimes we get a letter from someone who is very dear and precious to us. The body and the contents of the letter are interesting, but the part that really matters is at the end where that person sends us his or her love. It is to get to that bit that we read the letter. This is God sending us his love. And it is more than that. In most of the worship of the church the ordinary member has little or nothing to do. But in this service today, every one of us has to reach out our hand and take the elements of the bread and wine offered to us. It is as if God offers his love to each one of us personally and individually. This is God telling us that he loves each one of us as if there was only one of us to love. This is God saying to you, "I love you! I really do!"

Suggested Communion Prayers
To use in the Celebration of The Lord's Supper For Children
Dr. Myron J. Taylor

PRAYER – ONE.

Today as we come to celebrate the Lord's Supper, we remember that Jesus said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." As we partake of the wafer and the wine, keep our minds from wandering, and banish every evil thought, that we may be pure in heart and see only you. We remember how the risen Jesus was known to his friends in the breaking of bread, and how their hearts were set on fire as they talked with Jesus on the road. Make yourself known to us as we take the wafer and as we drink the wine, so that, having met you here, we may go from this place with our hearts on fire with your love. This we ask for your love's sake. Amen

PRAYER – TWO.

As we come to the Table today, dear God, we remember that John said: "If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us." We have done things that we should not have done, and we have neglected to do some things that we should have done. We have been careless and inconsiderate; we have been moody and difficult to live with; we have been unkind to those in our homes who love us most. For all of this we ask you to forgive us, O Lord, as we break the wafer and drink the wine which speak to us of the death of our dear Lord Jesus. Amen.

PRAYER – THREE.

As we come to this Table today, we know that our hearts lie bare and open before you, and you know all about us. We know that we can hide nothing from you. We remember your tender mercy and we ask for your forgiveness: for every mean and dirty thought which we have held in our minds; for every unkind word spoken in haste or anger; for every failure of self-control; for every stumbling block which we have put in someone else's way; for every opportunity lost; for every blessing we have received without expressing thanks; for laziness and putting off those things we know we should have done; forgive us, O Lord. And as we go from this Table today, may we allow your Holy Spirit to enter our hearts and guide us to a better life this week. Amen.

PRAYER – FOUR.

Give us a heart like the heart of Jesus, O God. Teach us to think of others. Especially today, as we take communion, we remember all those who do not have food or shelter or clothing; all who are sick and seriously ill; for the blind and the lame; for the lonely strangers among us; for sinful men and women who have lost their way; for all those afflicted by worry and anxiety; for those who fight for unpopular causes; for those who struggle with temptation. As we take the wafer and the wine may Jesus be very near to us to teach us to care and to do all we can to help others. Amen.